GILDED AGE AND PROGRESSIVE REFORMS!

Child Laborer, Newberry, SC, 1908

After the Civil War, the South remained poor. It was poor and agricultural. It was segregated. Blacks were discriminated against. They were treated badly. But the rest of the United States grew and grew to become strong!

The American economy was very strong. The Civil War was over. The North and Midwest had many industries. These industries just got bigger during the Civil War because they needed goods to fight the war. So, these states in the North, like New York, and in the Midwest, like Ohio, had many industries and factories.

The West was finally open to settlement. They built **that Trans-Continental railroad** that Stephen Douglas dreamed about. It connected all of the states.

The workers on this Trans-Continental railroad were lots of Chinese and freed blacks. They got paid very little. It was dangerous work.

The railroad companies that built the railroads got a lot of free land. So, even though they were losing money because the railroad was expensive, they got to own lots of land. Later, they turned that into money!

Central Pacific
Union Pacific
Added later

The US government had lots of land. There were lots of people who needed it. Soldiers coming back from the Civil War needed land. Immigrants from Europe wanted land. Even some freed blacks were given land.

Guess how much they paid for it?

They often paid nothing. They got it free. These were **homesteads.** Homesteads were big plots of land in the West where you could migrate. You could have the land for free if you started a farm and got some animals. The man who started this was Abraham Lincoln before he died. He started this **Homestead Act** because he wanted to settle the land and give jobs to people.

New agricultural industries connected the West. The homesteads led to development in Texas and prairie lands. These lands became the home of the American **cowboy.** They didn't have refrigerated trucks back then so they needed someone to "drive" the cows from where they ate to where they could be sold. You couldn't just kill the cows in Texas; you had to move them to a big city where they could be sold. The cowboy did this.

Complete

1. After the Civil War, what part of the USA stayed poor?

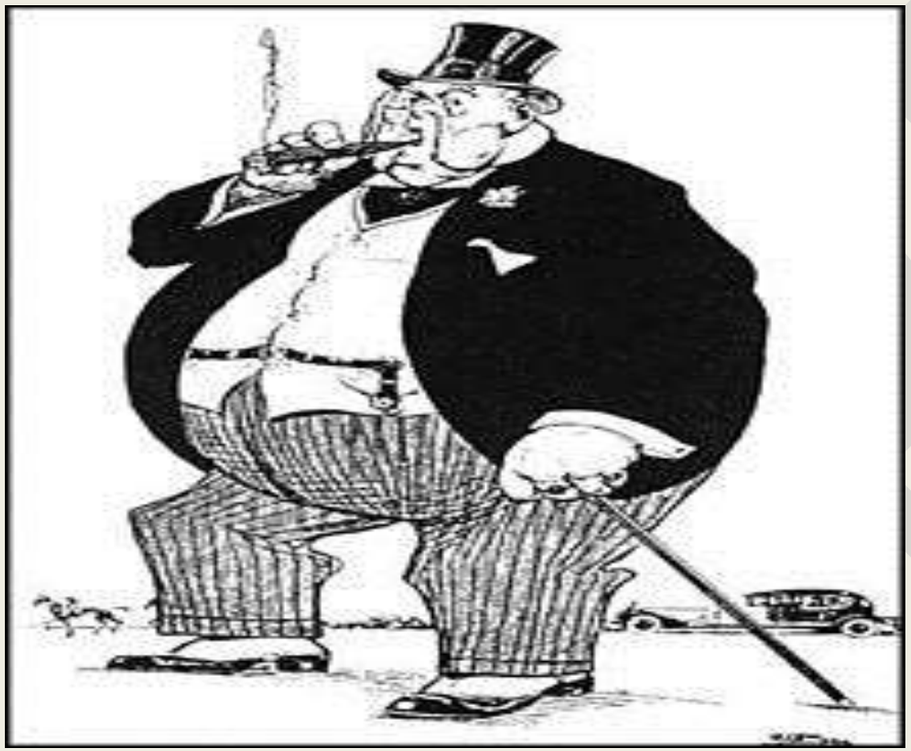
2. What connected the East and West and let people settle in areas that were hard to get to before?

3. Free land from the government happened because of what act?

4. What is a homestead?

5. What did the cowboy do?

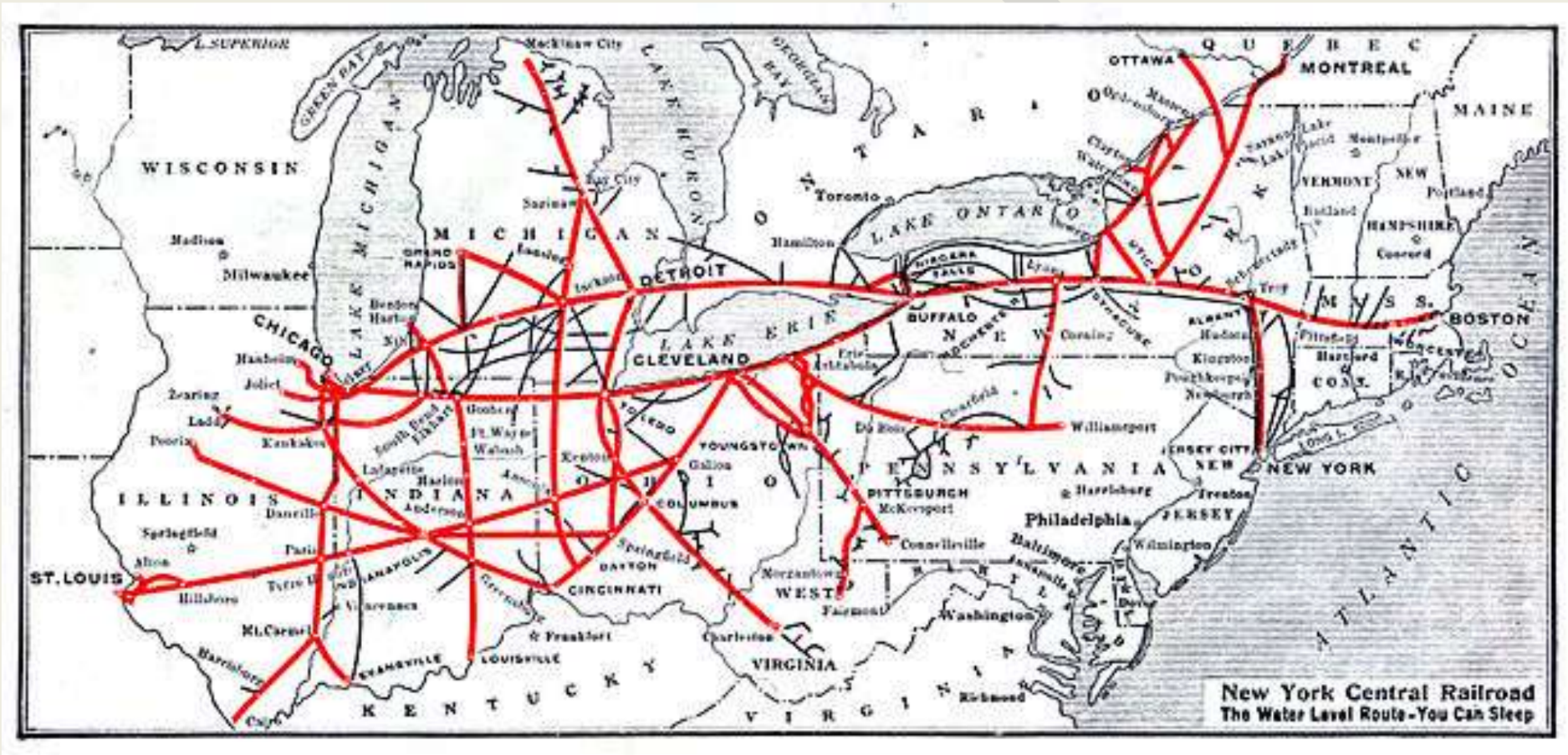
The USA entered a period called the Gilded Age. **Gilded** means gold. This was a period when a group of rich business people became even more rich. They became so rich that people joked that they could build houses made of gold. They were **gilded.** Everything they touched was gold.



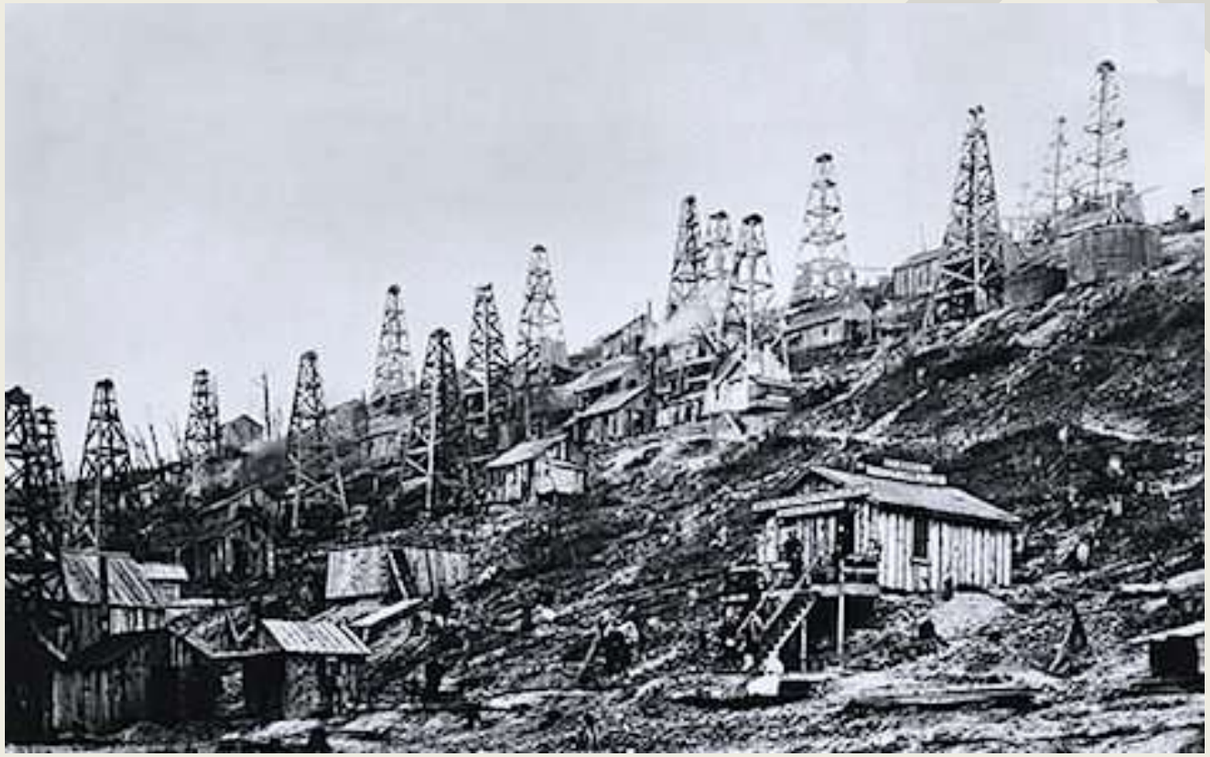
How did they get rich? Well, they got rich with industries. Just like nowadays we have Apple, Google, Netflix, Samsung, Nike, etc. back then they had big industries that controlled the markets. These were industries in more basic things.

Andrew Carnegie got rich with **steel**. His steel was used to build the new cities and metropolises. He donated a lot of money to good causes. This is called philanthropy.

Cornelius Vanderbilt got rich with **railroads**. His railroads made it possible to travel all across the United States.



John D. Rockefeller got rich with **oil.** His made more than a billion dollars with his company. He used **vertical integration** to buy up every aspect of the business, which increased his wealth. So, like he bought the oil wells, the refineries, the machinery to transport the oil, etc. He owned everything!



JP Morgan got rich with **banking.** His name is still famous in banking institutions.

Complete

1. JP Morgan is famous for _____.
2. Andrew Carnegie is famous for _____.
3. Cornelius Vanderbilt is famous for _____.
4. John D. Rockefeller is famous for _____.
5. The Gilded Age is a time when _____.

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These men got rich and contributed to America's growth. But they also contributed to inequality or disparity. Very few men got rich, but many men remained poor. The USA became a country of rich "robber barons" and poor workers. **Many people didn't believe these men deserved their money, so they called them robber barons.**

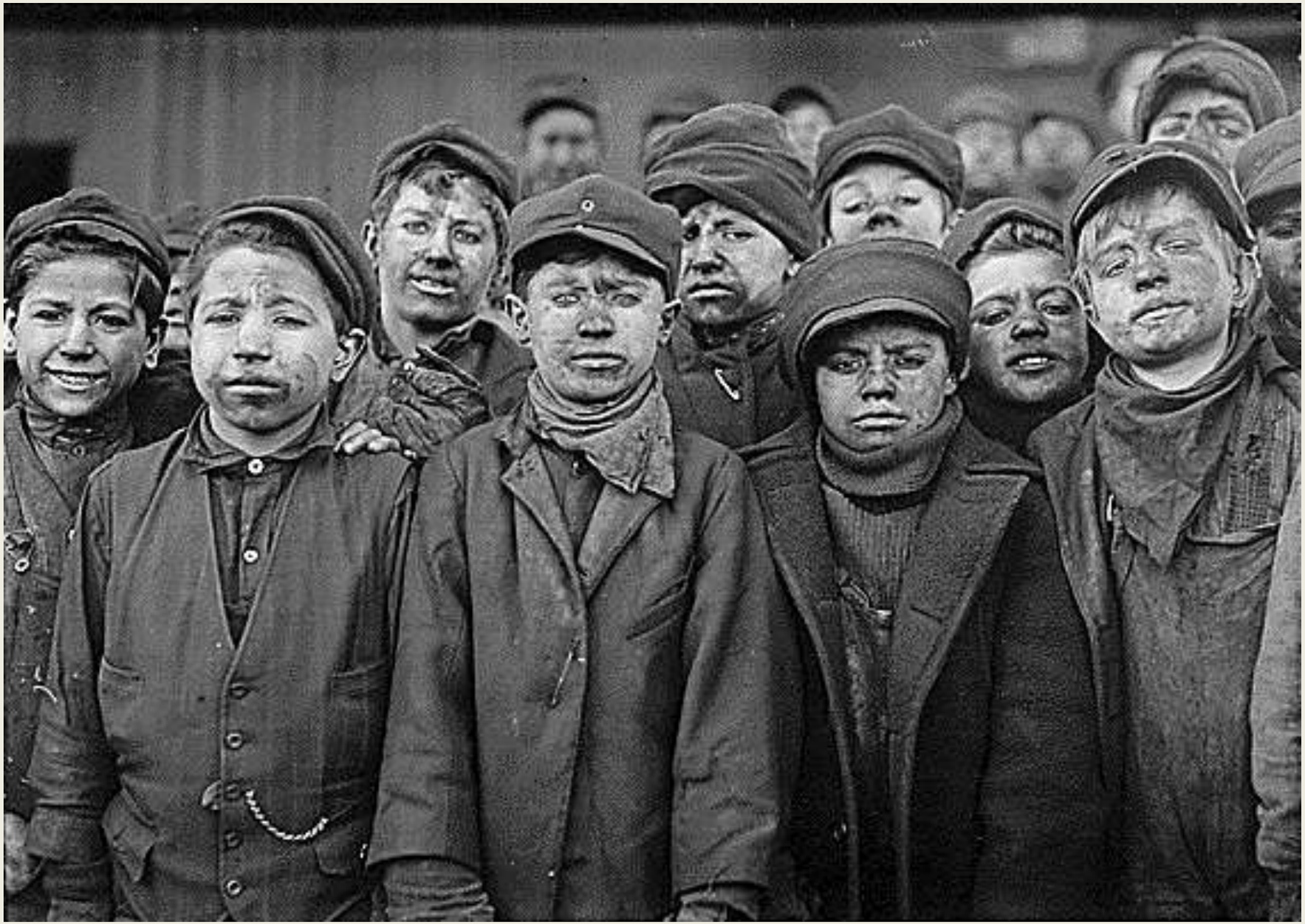
A robber baron is like how you get angry at your manager. All that your boss does is give orders… you do the work. But who gets paid? The boss!

Many people said: "You are robber barons. We do all the work and you get all the money!"

There was also a real problem with labor. Labor is another word for work. Well, industrial labor is different than farm work. In a factory, you can hire lots and lots of people to do dangerous jobs and not even care about them. If they die on the job, you can just get a new worker from the cities. Or an immigrant worker.

There were many immigrant workers with no rights.

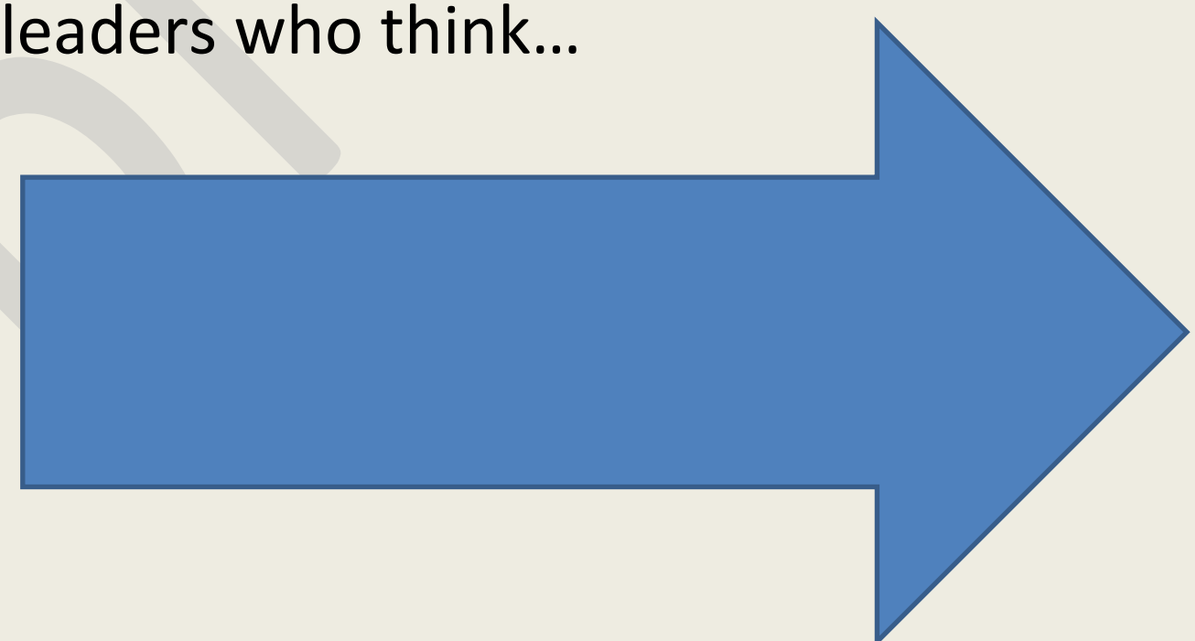
And even worse, there were many child laborers. These are kids under 15 years old with dangerous jobs!



So, the Gilded Age is a time when America gets rich but income disparity and child labor grows. It happens from the 1870s-1900s. The time after is called the Progressive Era. This when people start fighting back against bad working conditions, child laborers, and robber barons!

The Progressive Era was a reaction to the Gilded Age.

Progressives are politicians and leaders who think…



“Hey, this isn’t fair! Rich people shouldn’t be living these lavish lifestyles”

“Hey, the income disparity was never this bad! The rich are too rich! The poor are too poor!”

“No fair! The rich control everything. Guys like Vanderbilt and Rockefeller are the real leaders. We need a change!”

“There needs to be laws. There needs to be regulations. Business can’t do whatever it wants. This is a democracy!”

“STRIKE!”

“There are so many problems in the workplace. It’s not safe. There are no regulations. There are no child labor laws. The conditions are dangerous. We don’t have protection from our bosses!”

“We aren’t listening!”

So, here's a summary:

A few people get really rich during the **Gilded Age.** We are talking like less than 100. This is very few.

Many people suffer because **bad working conditions** in the factories. People want **reforms and regulations.**

Regulations are changes. When you make regulations, these are rules. They are rules like:
-no children under 12 years old should be working
-you need to limit the amount of hours you are required to work
-you can't be fired just because you get injured on the job

Complete

Is this a concern of the Progressive movement?

Yes/No	Child Labor
Yes/No	Women's Suffrage
Yes/No	State's rights
Yes/No	Worker's rights
Yes/No	Black education
Yes/No	Income disparity
Yes/No	Federalism
Yes/No	Democratic Reform
Yes/No	Regulations in the workplace

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Rewrite

The Progressives supported income disparities.

The rich people during the Gilded Age lived very common lives.

Working conditions were safe and regulated.

Children were prohibited from working during this time.

Progressives supported segregation and were against women's suffrage.

MASON MACHINE WORKS
PATENT
MASS 1903.
TAUNTON
MASON MACHINE WORKS
PATENT
TAUNTON

So, what happens if the bosses don’t want to change the working conditions? What if they don’t want regulations?

I mean, can you imagine what your teacher would do if you said: “No more homework! It’s not fair!”

The workers realized that they had to unite and organize to fight back. They needed to make unions, or labor unions, to get their points across.

Labor Unions form because people believe they can take matters into their own hands. They form unions. Unions have one big power against their bosses. They can stop working unless the bosses listen to their demands.

Some famous early unions are:

- Knights of Labor
- American Federation of Labor
- Ladies' Garment Workers' Union

The most famous union leaders are:

- Samuel Gompers
- Eugene Debs

The power of the worker is the strike:

The power of the bosses was to “BREAK” strikes:

So, if your class said to your teacher: “We’re gonna have a strike! No more homework!,” then your teacher would say: “I’m calling the principal.” This is what happened: The bosses called some tough guys to fight the strikers. There were big fights between workers and strikers. It was a time of fighting, and sometimes the workers lost. But sometimes they won…

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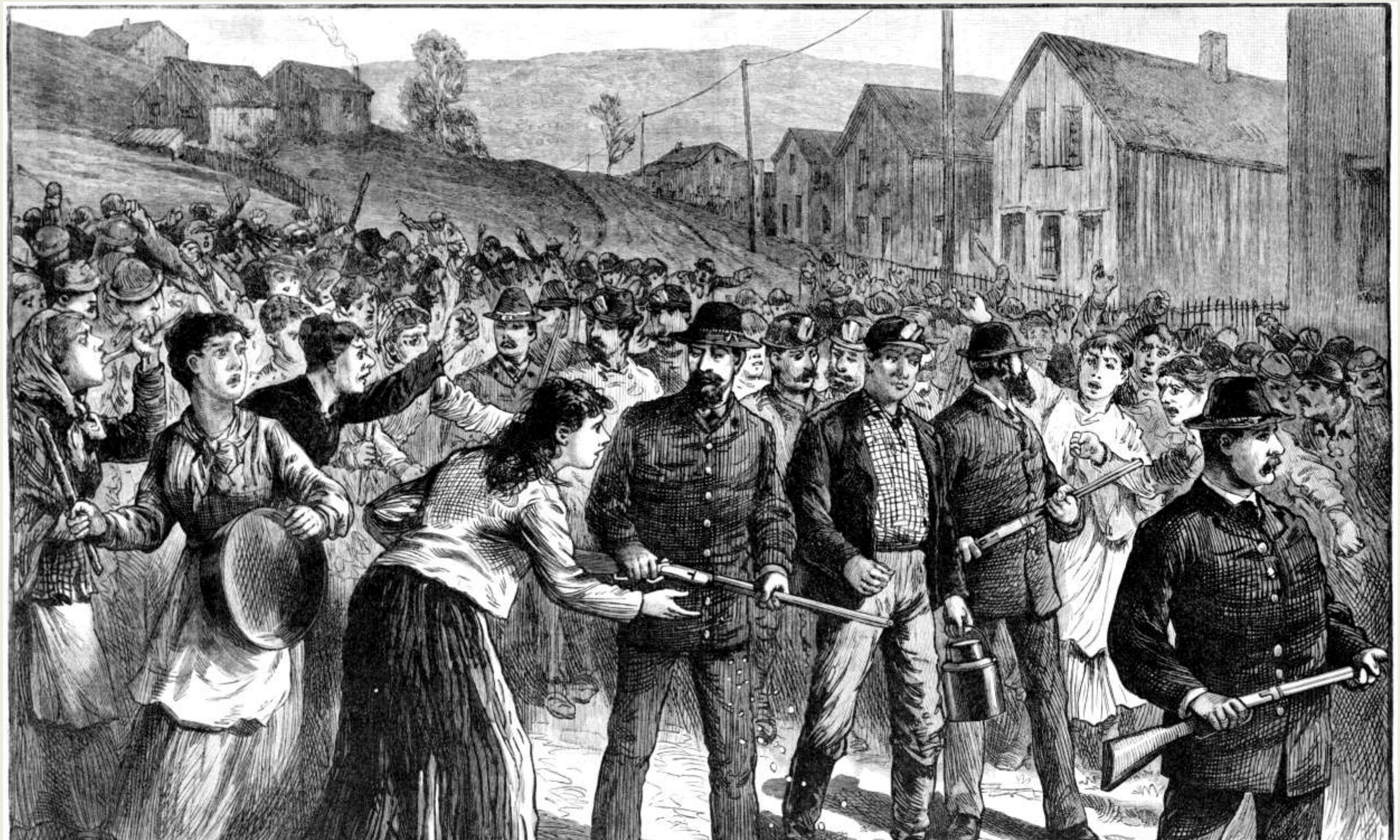

The labor unions did make some gains:

- Limited Working Hours:

Example: You didn’t have to work 7 days a week any more

- Regulated Work Conditions:

Example: Safety rules for the workplace

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The biggest controversy in the labor movement was about Child Labor. Young children regularly worked in mines and factories. It was normal.

Rewrite

Labor unions started because of excellent working conditions.

Complete

-How did the workers get the bosses to listen to them?

-How did the bosses control the workers?

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People called “muckrakers” wrote stories for newspapers and books about child labor and other abuses.

The most famous muckraker was Upton Sinclair, who wrote about the meatpacking industry and how disgusting it was.

His book was called “The Jungle.”

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The Jungle = Muckraking

After the Jungle came out, new regulations appeared to control industries like this one.

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Complete

-What is a muckraker?

-Who was the most famous muckraker?

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The government made some **reforms** on entire industries. When one company controls an entire industry, this is called a monopoly. A **monopoly** is bad because it restrains trade. This isn't fair and it isn't good for an economy.

The government made two anti-trust measures:

The Sherman Anti-Trust Act

- outlaws practices that "restrain trade"

The Clayton Anti-Trust Act

-outlaws "price-fixing" or keeping the price high on purpose

Complete

-The Sherman and Clayton anti-trust laws tried to break up what?

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Government reform was another progressive accomplishment…

The local, state, and federal governments also made reforms to their own practices.

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The city manager is in charge of a city. He organizes the city so it functions well on its own and doesn’t have to rely on the state government.

The City Manager is like the boss. Cities got so big that they needed bosses.

The other reforms have to do with DIRECT versus REPRESENTATIVE democracy.

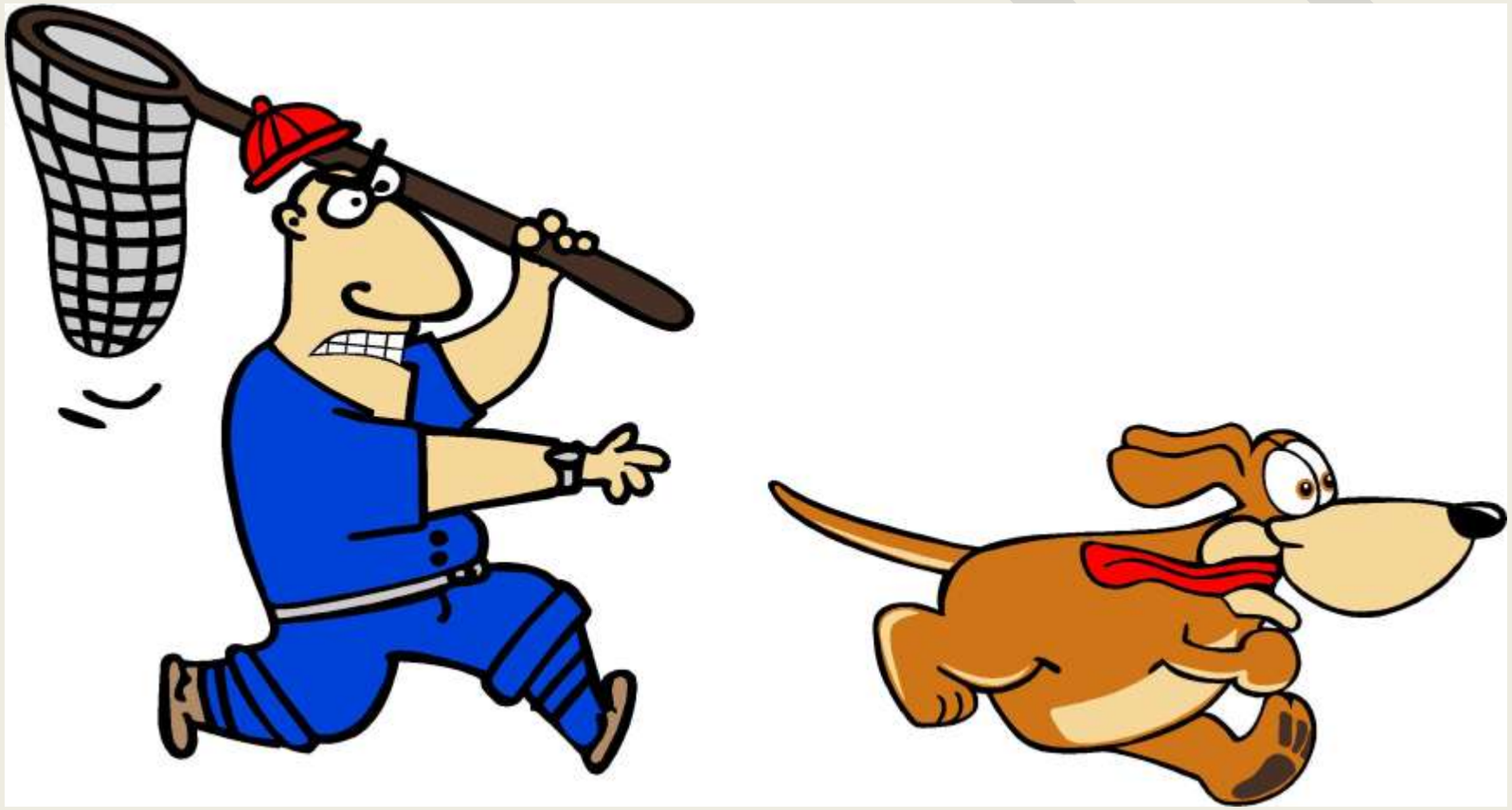
Direct means that the citizens vote directly on issues that are important to them; this comes from Athens, Greece.

Representative means that citizens vote for representatives who make decisions; this comes from Republican Rome.

The USA is a mix of the two but mostly representative.

The Progressive Era adds more direct democracy to the USA.

Before the Progressive Era, a lot of government jobs weren’t elected. They were appointed by powerful people. After the Progressive Era, most government jobs were elected. Even the job of dog catcher, for example, was elected.



The state government invented the referendum, recall, and initiative process, which allows citizens to participate in elections more directly.

Initiative, referendum, and recall allow citizens to propose laws and amendments. They can also recall politicians they don’t like.
These reforms give people direct control over democracy.

The national government instituted the secret ballot and the primary election.

Secret ballot means that who you vote for is a secret. This was necessary for the vote to be fair.

Primary election is when the people choose the candidates instead of the political parties.

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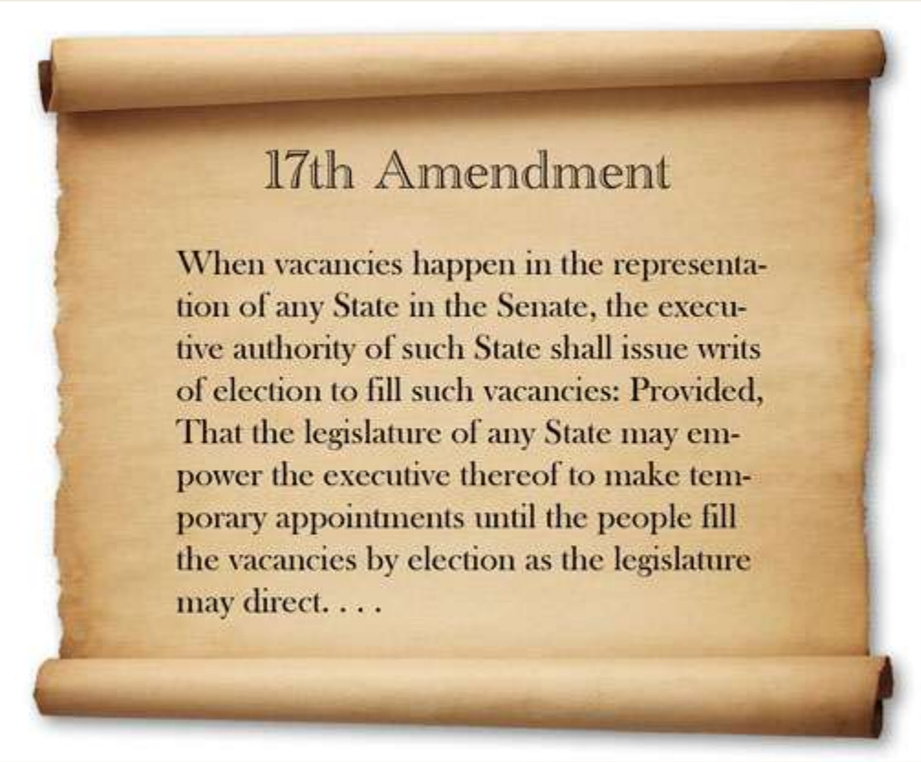
Another example of this movement towards direct democracy is the direct election of US Senators. This is the 17th Amendment.



Rewrite

Big cities created the position of commissar to plan and manage cities.

Referendum, iniative, and recall were moves towards representative democracy.

The 19th Amendment gave people the right to directly elect Senators.

After the Progressive Era, the political parties chose their candidates.

The secret ballot was canceled during the Progressive Era.

During the Progressive Era , women got the right to vote. They won their suffrage in the 19th Amendment.

Complete

-What reforms did women manage to get during this time?

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